

Soumillon, Christophe: Born: June 4, 1981. From: Belgium.

Moved to France at age 14 and lived the rest of his childhood there. Mother is Belgium, father is French. Began riding in 1999 and since 2000 dreamed of coming to the U.S. to ride in the Kentucky Derby. Didn't imagine that it would ever really materialize though because he rides primarily in Europe and few European based horses make it to the KY Derby. Finally made it—first Derby 2015 on Mubtaahij for Michael DeKock. Also rode Thunder Snow in the 2017 Kentucky Derby when his riding skills were tested in the first 1/8th a mile as Thunder Snow left the starting gate bucking and jumping rather than running. Soumillon deftly pulled him up and got him off the track and out of the way of the field before the field turned for home.

Has won Grade 1 or Group 1 races in: France, England, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, USA, Canada, Dubai, Italy and Germany. In preparation for his first KY Derby he watched replays of the previous 30 Derbies and concluded: "...easier to lose the race than it is to win it."

Missed the 2020 Breeders' Cup Championships after testing positive for COVID while remaining asymptomatic.